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GRADUATE RECITAL, FLUTE

Mary Pappert School of Music

PNC Recital Hall

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Music

Deidre Huckabay

May 2011

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GRADUATE RECITAL, FLUTE

Deidre Huckabay

Approved May 2011

Damian Bursill-Hall, M.M.
Adjunct Professor of Flute

James Houlik, M.S.
Professor of Saxophone
Chair, Woodwind Department
Co-Chair, Performance Department

Jessica Wiskus, D.M.A.
Chair, Musicianship Department
Associate Professor of Musicianship

Edward Kocher, Ph.D.
Professor of Trombone
Dean, Mary Pappert School of Music

Sister Carole Riley, C.D.P., Ph.D.
Director of Graduate Studies
Professor of Piano and Music Education

ABSTRACT

GRADUATE RECITAL, FLUTE

Deidre Huckabay

November 29, 2010

Supervised by Sr. Carole Ann Riley, C.D.P., Ph.D.

This evocative recital explores works for flute inspired by birdsong. The flute has long been used to imitate the calls of birds; its range and flexibility make the instrument a natural match for the avian syrinx. But the imitation of birds in music is no mere compositional gimmick. The literature for flute inspired by birdsong is impressive in its variety, depth, and significance. Vivaldi's *Concerto in D Major*, RV 428, presents a bird who bursts into delicate, refined song for the listener's pleasure. Called "Il Gardellino" ("The Goldfinch"), this charming showpiece depicts a well-trained songbird, a captive pet at once caged and preserved for exhibition by the musical score. Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir* (*The Blackbird*), on the other hand, features an unruly specimen whose shrill utterances and suspended melodies suggest both volatile energy and ancient wisdom. The quick, jerky movements of this species indicate an animal barely contained by the

score. His unintelligible song stands on its own without ceremony or explanation.

Other works on the program explore birdsong in different ways: Michael Colquhoun's *Speshal Birds* requires the performer to arrange short “chirps” during the performance, in the same way that birds arrange song components spontaneously. Richard Rodney Bennett's *Six Tunes for the Instruction of Singing-Birds* takes as its inspiration the 1717 recorder method *The Bird-Fancyer's Delight*—but the brutal calls heard in this version hardly resemble those of the tame species that antique manual intended to train.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe sincere thanks to my flute teacher and mentor, Damian Bursill-Hall. You've taught me a great deal about the flute, but, as important, you have provided an example in your sincere musicianship, your deliberate teaching style, and your compassionate character. Your insistence that musical programs are themselves thoughtful compositions inspired this recital program.

Thank you, Dr. Wiskus for your insightful feedback on early drafts of the performance paper that comments upon this program. I appreciate very much your encouragement and seemingly inexhaustible patience.

I must especially thank my parents for their continuous support of my flute playing and education. They both encouraged in me the reflective mood required to appreciate the beauty and variety of birdsong. Thank you, Mom and Dad.

PROGRAM

Le Merle Noir

Olivier Messiaen
(1908-1992)

Six Tunes for the Instruction of Singing-birds

Richard Rodney Bennett
(b. 1936)

- I. For the starling
- II. For the woodlark
- III. For the canary-bird
- IV. For the garden bull-finch
- V. For the East India nightingale
- VI. For the starling

Speshal Birds (2005)

Michael Colquhoun

INTERMISSION

Soaring (1986)

Joseph Schwantner
(b. 1943)

Digital Bird Suite

Takashi Yoshimatsu

- I. Bird-Phobia
- II. A Bird in the Twilight
- III. Twitter Machine –
- IV. A Bird in the Noon

Concerto in D major, RV 428, “Il Gardellino”

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678-1741)

- I. Allegro
- II. Cantabile
- III. Allegro